

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] It has been recognized that it would be advantageous to develop a system that facilitates the delivery of tickets. Almost all tickets to events still involve physical paper tickets at some stage of the process. The invention describes a method that can take advantage of mobile devices such as PDA's (Personal Digital Assistants) and a wide installed base of ticket receiving devices to eliminate costly and inconvenient printing. Secondarily, the invention also provides an "enhanced e-ticket" where an electronic ticket includes access to dynamic meta-information such as a seating chart, map, and directions to the closest restrooms or food stands for the seat assigned to the ticket.

[0006] One embodiment of the invention is a method for electronic ticket recognition and acceptance. The method includes the step of facilitating a purchase of an electronic ticket from a networked ticketing computer. Another step is downloading the electronic ticket to a portable computing device having a data output. An additional step is enabling activation of the electronic ticket to communicate the electronic ticket via the data output. This allows the displayed electronic ticket to be optically communicated to a ticket receiving unit.

[0007] Another embodiment of the invention provides a system and method where mobile computing devices are used to display an optical symbol (e.g., a barcode) that can be read by scanning devices deployed at gate entrances of ticketed venues. This system allows tickets to be remotely purchased, downloaded, and used without the need to ever print or obtain a physical copy of the ticket.

[0008] The invention also includes a system and method where infrared beaming ports or information ports installed at various locations throughout a venue are used to send customized, "localized" information to portable computing devices holding the e-ticket.

[0009] Additional features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the detailed description which follows, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which together illustrate, by way of example, features of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010] FIG. 1 illustrates a portable or mobile computing device that displays an electronic ticket;

[0011] FIG. 2 is a block diagram of the system for optically identifying and enabling the electronic ticket of FIG. 1;

[0012] FIG. 3 is a flow chart illustrating the steps taken for electronic ticket recognition and acceptance;

[0013] FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating the use of an information port with an electronic ticket;

[0014] FIG. 5 is a flow chart illustrating the steps taken in using an electronic ticket for amenities and entry at an event.